



State of Connecticut
SENATE

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March 11, 2015

Esteemed members of the Public Health Committee:

For the record, my name is Tony Hwang and I am the state Senator representing Connecticut's 28th District.

I am testifying in support of SB 809, which concerns hospital facility fees.

The complexity and seemingly constant state of flux in our health care system can be daunting to even the most knowledgeable in the industry; just imagine how hard it is to keep up with for the average consumer. At the end of the day, though, it boils down to the simple and critical fact that our health care system is about people and their well-being.

Our state can certainly be proud of the quality care patients receive at our hospitals, and the strides we have made to increase accountability and transparency with regard to treatment and costs. We have been responsive to trends and responsible representatives in protecting consumers.

We are now being called on to take action to further that commitment.

The seemingly arbitrary and borderline unscrupulous manner in which some hospitals are charging patients for facility fees undermines the trust and accountability that is critical to a successful health care system. Even more concerning, it is passing on to the consumer costs that are not even necessarily related to the delivery of care received, in some cases with no explanation or forewarning, which Comptroller Lembo notes in his testimony, is required by law. These fees are also driving up out-of-pocket costs for consumers, at a time when their health care costs are already on the rise.

SB 809 would cap facility fees at \$100, require insurance to cover the costs of facility fees, and would prohibit facility fees for certain procedures that can be performed safely in outpatient settings. In other words, the bill would create a necessary framework and bring about greater transparency and accountability. I ask for your favorable support of SB 809.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Kindly,

Tony Hwang